

Full Length Research

Does Colonial Rule Matter for Governance? A Study in the Context of Bureaucracy in Bangladesh

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The aim of this paper was to analyze the history of colonial rule and its impact on postcolonial bureaucracy and governance in Bangladesh. The paper is qualitative in nature and based on secondary sources of data and information. The major findings of this paper are: the structure of bureaucracy is inherited from the colonial rule. This legacy of colonial rule has impeded the postcolonial reform efforts. As an adverse effect of colonial rule politicization of administration and civil-military elitism has coexisted in bureaucracy that relaxes the accountability of administration. As a result, dominating bureaucratic role exhibits with rampant corruption in Bangladeshi governance.

Key Words: Bureaucracy, Colonial Rule, Postcolonial Reform Efforts, Governance, Bangladesh.

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INTRODUCTION

The governance of most of the third world countries have been embedded in the past and gradual development takes place on the basis of learning with the help of that past experience, to cope with the needs of changing times and demands of the common people. The system of government in Bangladesh is no different which traced back to the colonial history of Pakistan (1947-1971) and British India (1601-1947). Though, the postcolonial system of governance in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan continued to be influenced by the Westminster model of governance. However, they couldn't success like those Westminster countries because their inherited structure, status and behavioral formation of bureaucracy influenced and dominated post-colonial governance. An attempt has been made to explore how colonial rule influenced the governance of a postcolonial independent country like Bangladesh in this paper. This paper is

analyzed under the following three parts: theoretical framework, colonial rule, and postcolonial governance. In the theoretical part, conceptual issues and relevant theories have been illustrated which offers to explore the impact of historical institutionalism on institutional development and its impact on governance.

Theoretical Framework: Bureaucracy and Governance

It would not be amazing to Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson, if they out of the blue appear on the landscape of modern public administration with normative theories in hand, to recognize the field (Ewalt, 2001) because the paradigm shift from public administration to new public management where organizations operate within a notion

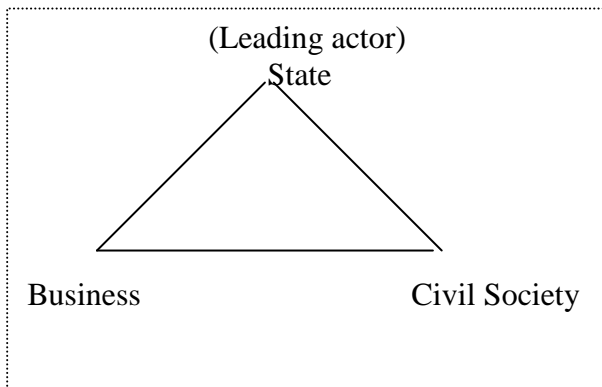


Figure 1: Model of Governance (Helu, 1997)

of governance. Governance is a much talked and pronounced issue for the last twenty years. This is a new process of governing, or a changed condition by which society is governed (Stoker, 1998:17). The term governance used instead of government goes back at least to the work of Harlan Cleveland (1972) and was a way of distancing authors "paradigm shift from public administration to new public governance" (Frederickson, 1999: 705). Simply governance means as a process by which a state manages its affairs through using its resources (both material and non-material resources). In a broader sense, governance means more than government, which refers to a democratic process that encompasses the whole society where the government is not the only actor of governance but also the private sector, NGOs, and other civil society organizations are encouraged and appreciated for participating in the development process as well as governance (Mollah, 2008). Helu (1997) used a triangular model (figure 1) of governance, which is worth mentioning for this paper. According to Helu, this model is applicable for a society as a whole where he mentioned three main actors of governance e.g. State (three organs of the state: executive, legislative and judiciary), Business and Civil Society. In this model, the state is the main actor of the governance process, which includes three branches—executive, legislative and judiciary to manage its affairs with the cooperation of business organizations and civil societies.

Basically, government deals through bureaucracy, which is ultimately responsible for implementation of government policy. Therefore, an efficient bureaucracy is indispensable for good governance. An efficient bureaucracy means, which act with integrity, impartially, fairly, and efficiently deliver public services to the peoples. By acting fairly and efficiently, public bureaucracy can fulfill the legitimate expectation of the people towards the public institutions. The bureaucracy of

Bangladesh is inherited from a long history of colonial rule. The following sections deal with colonial rules and its impact on bureaucracy and governance.

The Colonial Rule

In most developing nations, one of the dominant features of governance is its inherited colonial legacy, though, several attempts have been made for rehabilitation and reforming in the administrative superstructure in the postcolonial period (Haque, 1997). Since, numerous foreign rulers ruled the Indian subcontinent for over centuries and left a governance legacy, which for many years after independence has affected the government and politics of these societies. The system of government and administration under the reigns of Mughal Emperors, Hindu Kings and other Rulers of British India were characterized by despotism, however under various conditions British rule created a new and stable government in the Indian subcontinent (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). The colonial rule and the governance of Bangladesh have been analyzed as British India and Pakistan periods.

British India Period (1601-1947)

The root of the Indian Civil Service is originated from the early in the 17th century when the British East India Company came to India to trade by the patronage of Queen Elizabeth-I (Hunter, 1889) and settled its trading activities in India (1601-1722), showing no particular enthusiasm for taking political responsibility (Morris-Jones, 1957:3). In 1694, the Company acquired the status of Zamindar, with limited powers of local government as delegated by the Indian emperors. Then, by dint of the Diwani grant of 1765, the Company obtained the right to collect revenue and at this stage the governor and later governor-general exercised both executive and legislative power. Thus, the Company was the ruling power with administrative responsibility from 1772-1813 (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). The East India Company started its rule with the traditional bureaucracy and continued till Robert Clive. However, the administration of Warren Hastings introduced a bureaucracy dominated by European elements (Khan, 1980). The European civilians held the top offices while natives held the lower bureaucracy like as a blend of the old and new bureaucracies (Islam and Shelly, 2003). On the other hand, Lord Cornwallis abandoned the experiment of ruling the kingdom with a bureaucracy in partnership with the natives and laid the foundation of a colonial bureaucracy consisting exclusively of whites (Ali, 1965).

The civil service was made absolutely an all-white affair.

The natives were left with only insignificant jobs (Ali, 1993). The civil service manual embodying the rules and regulations and set-up of the Covenanted Civil Service (hereafter CCS) was incorporated into the Charter Act of 1793. Under the Charter Act of 1793, the Court of Directors enjoyed the privilege of recruiting members of the CCS, a privilege which came under severe public criticism after the abolition of the monopoly right of the Company in 1813 (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). Under the changed state of affairs, it became practically impossible to run the colonial state with only the white bureaucracy. The Charter Act of 1833 created a supreme government with governor-general of India in council (Obaidullah, 1999) and also provided that henceforth Un-covenanted Civil Service (hereafter UCS) would be open to all people irrespective of race, religion and caste but civilian pressure groups prevented the Charter declaration from being fully implemented (Khan, 1980).

Lord Bentinck introduced some reforms in the judicial branch of the government. He appointed a principal Sadar Amin in the district court. He also proposed to appoint a native deputy collector in the district administration but in the face of civilian opposition the proposal remained unimplemented until the 1840s (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). During that time, the recruitment examination was highly competitive and held in England. Very few Indians could have become a member of Indian Civil Service (ICS).

Successful candidates were a symbol of excellence. Career development of civil servants was smooth. Promotion and transfer were based on seniority, merit and performance (Rahman, 2002). From 1855 to 1914, Indian recruitment remained insignificant (only 84 as against 2644 Europeans), and no Indian could rise in rank above that of the district judge or district magistrate (Islam and Shelly, 2003).

These factors drew the attention of nationalists and the vernacular press. Their persistent demand was that in the governance of India, Indian participation would have to be made significant (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). Attempts were made to enhance native participation in the bureaucracy by restructuring UCS. Under the Civil Service Act 1861, the former UCS was abolished and a new service called Subordinate Executive Service for the Indian and Anglo-Indian communities was introduced (Ahmed, 1980). Under this service, deputy and sub-deputy collectors were appointed from amongst the departmental candidates (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). From a departmentally prepared panel of three persons, one was appointed on the basis of merit ascertained by a departmental competitive examination. Appointment to a substantive post of the Deputy collector and deputy Magistrate was preceded by a period of probation and passing of the departmental examination (Ali, 1993). Under the pressure of nationalists, the civil service was further Indianised in 1879 through the creation of a new

service called Statutory Civil Service, under which provisions were made to appoint a certain number of Indians in the higher executive service by nomination (Sitaramayya, 1935). Recruitment of aristocratic but loyal people from Hindu and Muslim communities was essentially the object of this service (Dodwell, 1926).

However, such divisive measures evoked severe criticism from the Bengal press and the elites. Their demand was to hold Indian Civil Service (ICS) examinations in India and recruit increasing number of Indians in the ICS and other services (Khan, 1980). Thus in 1886, Public Service Commission that was commonly called Aitchison Commission was established. The commission was asked to make recommendations on ways and means of further Indianising the civil service (Ali, 1993; Ahmed, 1980).

The Aitchison Commission recommended the abolition of the Subordinate Civil Service and Statutory Civil Service, and formation of Imperial Civil Service and other central services like the forest and public works (Kennedy, 1987; Ali, 2004).

The Aitchison Commission further recommended that some services reserved for the covenanted civil service (CCS) ought to be transferred to the provincial civil service and that every provincial civil service should have a junior cadre called subordinate civil service (Ali, 1993). Furthermore, it recommended that recruitment in these services should be made through competition among departmentally nominated candidates (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). In short, making a strong and prestigious provincial civil service was the essence of the Aitchison Commission (Ali, 1993; Islam and Shelly, 2003). All the recommendations of the Aitchison Commission were implemented, including the name of the service. Covenanted Civil Service was renamed as Indian Civil Service and thus the provincial civil service was introduced for the provinces (Khan, 1980).

Against unreserved and unrestricted Indianization of civil services, the central government argued that all provinces of British India were not equally equipped for open competition. Even within the province itself, in its view, all communities were not equally prepared for free competition (Islam and Shelly, 2003). In addition, there were ethnic and low caste problems. It was argued that completely open competition would lead to the absolute predominance of the Bengal Hindu Bhadrak (gentleman) class in civil services, a development that would create undoubtedly new political problems. For example, though Muslims were majority community in Bengal, in 1915 only five percent of them were represented in the service. The free competition was thus sure to make the situation further worse (Misra, 1970).

The problem was intensely studied by the Islington Commission (1912-1915) and recommended that 75 percent of the ICS should be recruited solely in England by open competitive examination and the remaining 25

percent were to be filled in India by nomination (Khan, 1980). The report was strongly opposed by the Indian National Congress and the nationalist press. In 1918, the Montagu-Chelmsford report suggested that one-third of the positions in the superior civil services should be recruited in India and that this percentage should progressively increase in the interest of the development of self-governing institutions (Younis and Mostafa, 2000).

In 1924 the Lee Commission further studied the recommendations of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and recommended for the planned Indianization of the civil services. According to the recommendations of the Lee Commission, 20% of the ICS vacancies should be filled by promotion from the provincial civil service, and 80% should be equally divided between Indians and Europeans (Islam and Shelly, 2003). Recruitment should be made on the basis of competitive examinations held in England and India. In the case of recruitment and promotions, the government was advised to keep mutual and ethnic interests in view. For the first time, ICS examinations were held in India in 1922. In 1926, the Indian Public Service Commission was established as per recommendations of the Lee Commission, (Ali, 2004).

The government of India Act 1935 provided for elaborate provisions in respect of civil service in India. The Public Service Commission consisted of five members including the chairman, and was directly appointed by, and responsible to, the Secretary of State-in-Council (Ahmed, 1980). Under the Government of India Act of 1935, many superior services were transferred to the provincial civil service. But the district administration was retained in the hands of the ICS until the end of British rule in 1947 (Khan, 1980).

The British system of governance was a unitary one with centralized control vested in the courts of directors of East India Company and later in the secretary of state for India who acted through viceroy and governor general (Ahmed, 1980). The viceroy was the sole agent of the British crown in India used to implement the imperialist policies through permanent secretaries and provincial governors who were directly answerable to him (Rahman, 2002). The authority of British rule was not open for challenge or account to the people. The only accountability was that of subordinates to the governor and council in each settlement who were bound to act in accordance with UK laws (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). During this period, corruption became rampant and spread in almost every sphere of administration (Khan, 1980).

Pakistan Period (1947-1971)

After the partition of India in 1947, the province of East Bengal comprising the present territories of Bangladesh

as the eastern part of Pakistan which inherited the British structures of administration along with the elite cadre of top civil service on the model of the erstwhile ICS (Ali, 1993; Islam and Shelly, 2003). Upon the independence of Pakistan in 1947, Jinnah decided for the vice-regal system and governorship instead of the Westminster system and Prime Ministership. Three out of four provincial governors under Jinnah were British ICS (Indian Civil Service) officers. Thus, Jinnah entertained advice from the British governors and senior secretaries and thereby decided the position of elected representatives (Islam, 1990).

Pakistan also had its own cadre of elite civil servants in the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) which existed in the original form until the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 when its Eastern wing (East Pakistan) emerged to have been an independent state of Bangladesh. Under the new circumstances, the elite civil services were recast to meet the demands of the new state (Islam and Shelly, 2003).

Since the dawn of post independent Pakistan, extraordinary power had been vested in governor general Jinnah, which eventually strengthened the position of bureaucrats step siding the authority of cabinet and indeed, the parliament. (Alavi, 1982). General Ayub usurped the power in 1958 and introduced basic democracy -a blend synthesis of autocratic elements in the British vice-regal system controlled by an autocratic civil-military axis (Islam, 1999). The bureaucracy and the state were directly linked with local level power holders who benefited immensely from state patronage, bypassing and isolating political leadership at the higher level. This system served the twin goals of consolidating bureaucratic manipulation and allowing a way for local election conferring a semblance of legitimacy on the government (Alavi, 1982).

The civil service of Pakistan was highly centralized. All key posts in the central and provincial governments and in the district administration and magistracy were reserved for select cadre who controlled the entire administrative apparatus (Rahman, 2002). The legend of the 'organized, competent and well-trained' bureaucracy worked in a system, which had an uneasy partnership with politicians. Thus, lack of understanding of politics and bureaucracy opened the door of frequent and long intrusion of the military into the political arena in Pakistan (Islam and Shelly, 2003). In 1958 when military bureaucrats took power in Pakistan by promulgating the martial law, the CSPs, and other civil bureaucrats had got an initial shock, but their role as civil servants was never disparaged (Khan, 1980). However, the situation was never as before, as the army rulers needed only the very obedient civil servants to prolong their military dictatorship. They began a sort of politicization of the civil bureaucracy in Pakistan (Alam, 2003). Notwithstanding such disagreeable developments, the civil bureaucracy of

Pakistan remained a prominent part of the total system of governance (Alam, 2003). Thus, the bureaucrats backed by the army had governed the state without being answerable to a politician (Rahman, 2002).

Kennedy identifies the following consequences of the cadre system, which affected the administrative environment of Pakistan since 1947 (Kennedy, 1987): First, it had led to what he calls 'unbalanced development' in terms of the growth of representative institutions. Second, it had impeded the process of administrative reforms because of the entrance vested interest of bureaucratic pressure groups. Third, it had contributed to administrative inefficiency. However, administrative inefficiency may be caused by factors other than cadre politics. These include lack of motivation, lack of supervision and of accountability. It is also largely caused by lack of a system of neutral and apolitical recruitment, lack of adequate training and adequate competition and finally lack of guarantee against an assured career and protection against victimization on political or other grounds. Finally, it may also be caused by frequent tinkering with the services structure in the name of reorganization.

During Pakistan period, no viable instrument of holding the bureaucrats accountable by the politicians was evident. The bureaucrats were actively involved in politics (Rahman, 2002). For instance, Ghulam Mohammad who was an ex-bureaucrat became the governor general of Pakistan and misused his discretionary power even by sacking elected provincial government, dissolving constituent assembly in 1954, appointing new prime minister after his choice and so on (Alavi, 1982). Under the new constitution of 1956, an elected President replaced the Governor-General. The constitution provided for the provincial governments headed by governors to be accountable to the President. The provincial cabinet, which consisted of a Chief Minister and Ministers, was to be accountable to the provincial legislature.

All the subordinate officials of secretariat were accountable to the chief secretary. In 1966, the secretariat consisted of 361 officers of different grades and nomenclature. By 1971, the secretariat consisted of the chief secretariat, 2 additional secretariats, 11 secretaries, 4 Additional Secretaries, 36 Deputy Secretaries, 172 Section Officers and 48 other officers (Ali, 1993). The restoration of accountable government and administration was further obstructed when power was not transferred to East Pakistan's Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was stopped from the forming the government despite his party's overwhelming victory in the first free election in December 1970. Then subsequent disagreements between Mujib and Yahya compelled Mujib to declare independence of Bangladesh in March 1971.

Postcolonial Administration and Governance in Bangladesh

Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign nation in the map of world on December 16, 1971, after defeating the Pakistani rulers by a nine months freedom war. Under the presidency of Justice Abu Sayeed Choudhury the first provincial government of Bangladesh formed in Dhaka the capital of present Bangladesh. At the same time Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, father of the national was declared as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The main aim of the new government was to reengineering the existing administrative structure into an accountable public administration of Bangladesh (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). Since independence to the present day, there have been numerous changes in political leaderships and forms of government in Bangladesh. Though, the Mujib regime started its journey with a parliamentary form of government, which has four basic principles like nationalism, secularism, socialism, and democracy. However, in December 1974, Mujib government changed the form of government from parliamentary to presidential form of government with declaring that all political parties would come under one political party, the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSHAL) with a view to overcoming continuing economic deterioration and mounting civil disorder of post independent Bangladesh. Thus, the parliamentary form of government was departed the first time in Bangladesh. Within five years of its independence, Bangladesh had succumbed to a successive military coup that resulted in the emergence of Army Chief of Staff General Ziaur Rahman (popularly known as Zia) ultimately as the head of state. The military rule was continuing around 15 years through Zia and Ershad. During these periods of Military rule, the constitution was suspended and citing pervasive corruption, ineffectual government, and economic mismanagement. Though both Zia and Ershad tried to civilize the military government by election but actual parliamentary democracy was born in Bangladesh in 1991 by twelfth amendment of Bangladesh constitution. Though, parliamentary system of government was reintroduced in 1991 and continued with fluctuations of multiparty politics however the real democratic practice is still absent in Bangladesh. By this time several reforms efforts have been taken by both military and successive government, however, there have been minimal changes in its inherited colonial structure of politics and administration. In the previous section, it has been found that the political elements of the Indian subcontinent were absent in governing the state in British India. Even in Pakistan period it also found that after immediate of independence of Pakistan the governance was captured by Military for lack of political giants. As Bangladesh emerged from British and Pakistani governance subsequently, so the politics and government of

Bangladesh is also affected and suffered by military coups. The post-independent administration and governance of Bangladesh have been analyzed under the following features.

Structure of Bureaucracy

In most developing countries, one of the most dominating features of bureaucracy is its inherited colonial legacy, in spite of the post-colonial rehabilitation and reforms in the administrative superstructure (Haque, 1997). The British and Pakistani ruler ruled Bangladesh more than two centuries. The administrative structure emanated from the British and Pakistan exhibited all the cardinal features of colonial bureaucracies (Zafarullah, 1987). With its distinctiveness as a special social group, the bureaucracy maintains itself as a subsystem with pronounced autonomy. It virtually shields itself from other functional groups and its members occupy key positions in the governmental structure and wield tremendous power and authority over policy making (Zafarullah, 2007). Due to the colonial origin derivative postcolonial reform and exogenous nature of state bureaucracy in developing countries, there emerged a significant degree of incongruity between bureaucracy and society, which has serious implications for the perpetuation of various administrative, political, economic and cultural problems in these countries (Haque, 1997). Moreover, during the British colonial regime, the bureaucracy condemned the role of politicians but it was a well-established institution characterized by merit principle, elitism and strong esprit de corp (Rahman, 2002; Zafarullah, 2007). Therefore, post independent structure of bureaucracy or civil service was the replica of Pakistan and British Indian civil service. That's why from the very beginning of Bangladeshi governance, top-level bureaucrats had a dominating role in policymaking.

Postcolonial Reform Efforts

Since independence, administrative reform has been the main agenda of nearly every government in Bangladesh to diagnosis the administrative defects and recommends corrective measures (Khan, 1980) so that the administration can come out from the grips of colonial structure. There are seventeen major civil service reforms and pay commissions and committees have been appointed and all have submitted their reports with recommendations in Bangladesh (Manzoor Alam, 2006). However, there is hardly any substantive change in the structure and composition of the public service and the work attitudes of the civil servants.

Besides, government initiatives, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development

(USAID), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) all provided support at various times to make the civil service system efficient, productive, effective and accountable. However, most of the recommendations and suggestions of the civil service reform and pay commissions and other donor-supported initiatives were not implemented (Manzoor Alam, 2006). One may wonder why those recommendations were not implemented? The possible answer might be the bureaucrats dominate the administration and politics in Bangladesh since independence that's why they don't want to implement any policy which might be a threat to their interest, status and elitist position in Bangladesh. Beside this, there was a very little political commitment for implementing the major administrative reforms. M.M. Khan (1998) one of the eminent administrative thinkers in Bangladesh illustrated some causes for unimplemented the reform efforts in Bangladesh as i. the reform proposals were considered as ends in themselves rather than means to achieving higher level ends. ii. there was no organized and sustained movement from outside to mount pressure on the policy makers to bring about meaningful and desired reforms. iii. there was no centrally located and politically powerful agency specifically designated for reform monitoring and implementation. iv. Involvement of relevant professionals in the reform implementation process was not sought. v. there was very little interest and enthusiasm on the part of senior civil servants to implement major reform proposals.

Besides these, the failure of reform can be attributed to 'bureaucratic intransigence and inertia, political insensitivity, and inaction, anti-reform sentiment in public sector organizations and alienation of the civil society from the reform process' (Zafarullah, 2002:66).

Therefore, it can be assumed that there is a crucial impact of colonial rule and its structure of bureaucracy in every aspect of governance. It has been seen in British and Pakistani civil service that the civil servants were most intelligent and who had to qualify through the competitive exam and once they became elites in civil service and there were no accountability to the people at large. So, post independent bureaucrats who inherited from Pakistani Civil service were also appeared as elites in Bangladesh civil service and played a vital role in policy making and implementation. This bureaucratic elitism is also continuing still today.

Civil-Military Elitism in Bureaucracy:

One of the most notable legacies of British colonial rule in Bangladesh has been the presence and persistence of Civil-military elitism in bureaucracy. The higher civil

bureaucracies the generalist administrators, in particular, have manifested a remarkable resilience even under changing social and political conditions to maintain their 'supreme' status in state and society. The prestige, social esteem, influence, authority and permanency of tenure that a position in the prime civil service carries provided the impetus for elitism to further endure in bureaucracies (Zafarullah, 2007).

The administrative system in Bangladesh (post-independence in 1971) that went through a period of consolidation in Pakistan (1947-1971) continued with an overdeveloped bureaucracy reminiscent of British colonial rule. Bureaucratic dominance was the appendage of an administrative culture that nurtured elitism that was supported in large measure by the military. As one noted scholar, Alavi (1972: 61), argues: the state was 'enmeshed in bureaucratic controls by which those at the top of the hierarchy of the bureaucratic-military apparatus of the state were able to maintain and even extend their dominant power in society'. Rather than being attuned to the needs of an emerging democracy in a sovereign country, the bureaucracy saw itself as an elite institution with an inalienable prerogative to govern or influence governance (Ahamad, 1980; Zafarullah, 2007). After the death of Mujib, Bangladesh has been governing by the military person with Martial law and others for the 15 years, which contributed largely to make the bureaucracy with bureaucratic- military apparatus elitism. During the military regimes, the bureaucracy managed to restore its pre-liberation position. The militarization of bureaucracy was a distinguishing feature of military regimes. Civil-military bureaucrats and politicians became allied forces with bureaucracy in the forefront (Rahman, 2002).

Even after the restoration of parliamentary democracy, bureaucracy resumed influencing the governance system due to the confrontational politics between the position and opposition political parties and division of bureaucracy along party lines (Rahman, 2002). The bureaucracy in Bangladesh is constituted of discrete functional cadres of whom the Administrative Cadre is the premier elite corps. Its roots lie in the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), which itself had its origins in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) the 'steel-frame' of British colonial rule (Zafarullah, 2007). Like its ancestors, it largely conforms to the structural attributes of the Weberian bureaucratic model open competitive recruitment system based on academic achievement, elaborate and structured post entry and in-service training procedures, a promotion process mainly premised on the seniority criterion, a graduated salary structure with regular increments not linked to performance, attractive perquisites, frequent rotation between departments, well-designed post-retirement pension packages and so on (Etzioni-Halevy, 1985).

The above-mentioned characteristics of bureaucracy

are inherited from the previous bureaucratic system. Thus colonial rule affected next generation's governance by pushing its rules, regulations, behavior pattern, training etc.

Politicization of Bureaucracy:

Politicization of bureaucracy is not directly inherited from colonial rule. However, this character of Bangladesh civil service is one of the indirect adverse effects of colonial rule. Since, Bangladesh was under colonial rule more than two centuries and the entrance of Bangladeshis were limited in civil service due to lack of competence, the amount of inherited civil servant was insufficient to govern the new state smoothly. On the other hand, most of the Ministers and MPs (except few) of the new government were inexperienced to deal administration but the inherited civil servants were very much experienced and experts who helped that new government to govern the country. The true fact is that the senior bureaucrats of Bangladesh are more efficient than a politician and it is an open secret for everybody that they do work to attract the concentration of dominating political parties from beginnings of independence. Even, today after 38 years of independence, some retired bureaucrats act as advisors of the present prime minister of Bangladesh who bears status of a state minister but in practical they exercise power more than a full minister. The present finance Minister of Bangladesh was also a retired bureaucrat (Ex CSP) however he has a long political experience.

So, ultimately, the colonial rule is responsible for postcolonial recruitment, selection, promotion etc in civil service, which is also administered by the inherited structure and bureaucrats. Politicization of bureaucracy is started from the very beginning of independent Bangladesh. The most unfortunate part of the episode was that a division was created between both the civil and military bureaucrats in terms of freedom fighters and non-freedom-fighters, which ultimately affected the efficiency of the bureaucratic system (Ahmed, 1980). There is no doubt that the freedom-fighters were the great sons of the soil and the nation shall remain ever grateful to them for their priceless sacrifices. Again, there were scores of ways to pay tribute to them. Thus was the beginning but not the end of the politicization of the bureaucracy in Bangladesh (Alam, 2003).

The next drive to the bureaucracy was launched in 1973 when the 1st batch of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) and other sister services were recruited just on the basis of viva-voce conducted by the Bangladesh Public Service Commission. Against the advertised 300 Class-1 vacant posts, more than two thousand people were recruited generally on political grounds (Ahmed, 1980). Subsequent governments too resorted to almost similar

slackening in the recruitment process as also in the promotion and posting matters to subserve their respective political purposes (Khan, 1980). However, most unrestrained politicization and moral decadence took place during the autocratic regime of H M Ershad. While the civil bureaucracy was used to prolong the despotic rule, the age-old and time-tested civil administrative structure was deliberately destroyed (Alam, 2003).

Though, 1991 the successive elected governments, since depended upon the civil bureaucracy for routine administration or development work, resorted to political appointments in many important state establishments including the Public Service Commission. Besides, many retired civil servants were re-employed mostly on political affiliation, blocking thereby the scope of promotion of the junior ones (Rahman, 2002). Then again, in sharp contrast to what was available for the military establishments, little efforts were given to standardizing the recruitment procedure; training facilities, service structure etc of the civil bureaucracy (Alam, 2003). Virtually, nothing has been done to attract the brilliants in different superior services. Thus, except a few fortunate high-ups, the civil bureaucracy, in general, was subject to continuous apathy, which ultimately resulted in the qualitative deterioration in the total system of governance.

Relax Accountability of Bureaucracy

From the ancient time, it has been found the evidence that bureaucracy in British Era was very much Elitist group and had a distinguishing feature of status and prestige and there was no accountability to the people. Only they were accountable to the viceroy who was the sole agent of the British crown in India used to implement the imperialist policies through permanent secretaries and provincial governors who were directly answerable to him (Rahman, 2002). Later the East India Company consolidated its position, increasingly sharing its sovereignty with British Crown and virtually losing its mercantile privileges (palmer, 1961:49) and all powers of government were concentrated in the heads, which were styled collector or Deputy Commissioner of the district's the principal unit of British Indian administration. The collector was accountable to the board of Revenue and the Governor General's Council (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). In Pakistan period, accountability of bureaucracy was same like British regime.

Though, Bangladesh was independent in 1971 and started with a parliamentary democratic government, where accountability of both politician and bureaucracy were to the parliament but in January 1975 the form of government were replaced parliamentary to presidential government and all the power and authority was

centralized and accountability of bureaucracy and politicians were relax again (Rahman, 2002). In August 1975, Mujib, and most of his family were assassinated by mid-level army officers and the formal military ruling has started this country and continued 15 years by Zia and Ershad. During the military regime, the constitution was ineffective and fundamental rights were violated and all the power was highly centralized accountability to the people were far away from the real consonant (Ahmed, 1980). Though both Zia and Ershad tried to civilize the military government by election, but actual parliamentary democracy was born in Bangladesh in 1991 by twelfth amendment of Bangladesh constitution.

Furthermore, the democratic governance practice has been started in Bangladesh from 1991 to till day but real democratic values and political behavior is still absent in our country. Boycotting of parliament, concentrate to the opposition, politicization and patronage of bureaucracy and other job sectors are still going on. However, accountability of government is increased by the parliament but in very relax mood. Tough there are several Bureaucratic accountability mechanisms exists in Bangladesh. However, practical implementation of this mechanism is very rare and relaxes. The internal form of accountability is very confidential and people don't know what happens in reality. One the other hand most of the external form of accountability is not enough independent like the judiciary. Some of the institutions yet not been established in Bangladesh like Ombudsman, Peer Review, Media Scrutiny etc. However, some external institutions like evaluation research, freedom of information, public comment, interest group pressure, political parties, exists but ineffective and government have no care to them.

Corruption

Another cardinal feature of Bangladesh bureaucracy is corruption. Corruption is all-pervasive in Bangladesh. Though corruption has been a part of our politico-administrative heritage, there is little denying the fact that after independence the tentacles of corruption have engulfed the entire society (Khan, n.d). In ancient India, corruption was prevalent in administration, judiciary and trade. As indicated earlier corruption in one form or another became an integral part of politico-administrative systems during the Khilji and Tuglaq dynasties. The situation did not change during the rule of Mughals and the British (Khan, n.d). Many politicians were charged with corruption and debarred from politics after the promulgation of the first martial law in Pakistan in 1958. Many civil servants, some belonging to the elite Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), were dismissed from their services on corruption charges (Alavi, 1972).

Abusing power and authority to grant undue favor and

benefit to one's relatives, friends, and key supporters is a hallmark of politics in Bangladesh. All the effective rulers have been accused of either direct or indirect involvement in large-scale corruption (Younis and Mostafa, 2000). Corruption has also been and continues to be an integral part of the bureaucratic culture in Bangladesh. The level of corruption varies depending on how influential a position the particular civil servant holds (Khan, 1997). The civil servants have by and large become accustomed to living a lifestyle far beyond their legal income (Zafarullah, 1987). The citizens have accepted the stark reality that nothing moves without adequately satisfying the concerned civil servant (Khan, 1997).

Bureaucratic Role in Governance:

In developing countries, the bureaucracy is used as an instrument of development and social change. Apart from performing functions of a traditional nature (regulatory, corrective, and fiscal), the bureaucracy is called upon to undertake nation-building activities, implement policies towards economic and social progress, and manage development and welfare projects (Zafarullah, 2007). The machinery of government is expected to be engaged in the efficient management of facilities and services, in developing modernizing skills, in encouraging people's participation in community development, and like these (Zafarullah, 1998). Alongside these, in Bangladesh the policy arena continues to be dominated by members of the Administrative Cadre of civil service who conceive and develop policies and administer them and even undertake their evaluation and impact assessment (Zafarullah, 2007). The scope for non-state actors such as interest groups and civil society organizations to contribute to policy making is severely limited, and legislators are circumspect in playing their appropriate role largely due to strict party discipline enforced in parliament. The latter simply endorsed policies contrived by bureaucrats under the behest of the executive during 'democratic' rule between 1991 and 2006 (UNDP, 1993; Khasru, 1998; Khan, 2006). Ideas emerging from policy communities rarely, if ever, enter the policy formulation discourse and their 'involvement' is purely pretense rather than a serious exercise in participatory policy making.

While the ruling party and its leadership may have had their own political agenda for execution, the choice among policy alternatives was significantly influenced by higher level bureaucrats located at the Prime Minister's Office or key ministries such as Finance and Establishment (Zafarullah, 2007). These places are invariably and conspicuously inhabited by members of the generalist Administrative Cadre and they play the crucial role in advising their ministers about policy options. Basically, a relatively small band of officials from

the largely insulated Administrative Cadre initiates and justifies policy moves shielded from most external influences. As an example, several attempts to bring about important changes to the administrative structure and processes, which have been quashed, by these generalist bureaucrats. Policies and decisions which regulating the civil service has also been manipulated by them to further establishes their interests rather than the civil service in general (Zafarullah, 2002). This is also factual for economic policy making which is restricted by limited input from the private sector (Ahmed, 1994). In fact, the opportunity for creating participatory structures and building social trust within this flexible governmental atmosphere is constricted thereby blocking civic engagements in the public affair.

Besides these, the bureaucracy in today's Bangladesh displays a number of traits of the colonial period like hierarchy within the bureaucracy and a wide gap in the superior subordinate relationship. This is ultimately impacted their family life like treated as 'boss family', and with general people, for example, frequent use of "yes sir" (Jamil, 2007). This relation reflects paternalists of bureaucrats, on the one hand, and their strict adherence to laws, rules and regulations, on the other hand. Rules and laws are seldom bent except upon tidbit in spite of their discretion to do it in the case of policy implementation or in service delivery. Siddiqui (1996:13) explained this relationship between bureaucrats and citizens in the following way:

...The official will turn into a tiger when dealing with the common man. suspicion, disbelief, misbehaving, and throwing about rules are the common weapons he would generally employ in treating the lung-clad (layman) person daring to come up to him. Even the bench or the stool may not be offered to him let alone any refreshment. He is only expected to keep standing and wait with folded hands.

Thus, the bureaucracy in Bangladesh plays a vital role in governance through contributing in policy making and implementation. However, there is an elitist group exists in civil service who belongs administrative cadre known as general cadre. Their attitude shows like a boss in service delivery to the common people, which was a cardinal feature of British Indian Civil Services. Therefore, the colonial rule influences the total system of bureaucracy in Bangladesh, which ultimately affected the post independent Bangladeshi governance and still continuing today.

Concluding Remarks

The foregoing discussion reveals that the basic structure

of bureaucracy in Bangladesh is inherited from the British India. During the British colonial regime, the bureaucracy deprecated the role of politicians but it was a well-established institution characterized by merit principle, elitism and strong esprit de corp. After the partition of Pakistan from British India in 1947, Pakistan inherited an overdeveloped state apparatus, along with its administrative elites. The civil service of Pakistan was highly centralized where all key posts in the central and provincial governments and even in the district administration and magistracy, were reserved for select cadre who controlled the entire administrative apparatus and became the most dominant social sector in Pakistan. During this period Pakistani bureaucracy became allied force with the military, pushed the politicians at bay and explicitly ruled the country until the insolvency of Pakistan. Though some reform efforts have been taken to develop the bureaucracy, however, there have been little changes in its inherited structure of public bureaucracy.

Bangladesh became independent from Pakistan in 1971, and the administrative structure that inherited exhibited all the cardinal features of colonial bureaucracies. Since the post independent structure of bureaucracy was the replica of Pakistan and British Indian civil service, as a result from the very beginning of independence of Bangladesh, the top-level bureaucrats have a dominating role in policymaking. The militarization of bureaucracy is a distinguishing feature of Bangladesh administration. Civil-military bureaucrats and politicians became allied forces with bureaucracy in the forefront like Pakistan who dominated the administration and governance in Bangladesh and still continuing today. Even after the restoration of parliamentary democracy, bureaucracy resumed influencing the governance system due to the confrontational politics between the position and opposition political parties and division of bureaucracy along party lines.

It has been found that since independence, administrative reform has been the main agenda of nearly every government in Bangladesh to diagnosis the administrative ills and recommends corrective measures so that the administration can come out from the grips of colonial structure. There are seventeen major civil service reforms and pay commissions and committees have been appointed and all have submitted their reports with recommendations in Bangladesh. However, there is hardly any substantive change in the structure and composition of the public service and the work attitudes of the civil servants. The major findings of this paper are: structure of bureaucracy is a colonial legacy, failure of postcolonial reform efforts due to bureaucratic resistance, politicization of bureaucracy, administrative corruption, centralized and elitist character of civil servants with military components, lack of strong leadership and political commitment, bureaucratic dominance in governance, a widening gap between people and

administration, and so on.

Finally, it can be said that Bangladesh civil service is a well-institutionalized service with its own set of values, but it evolved within an under-institutionalized political environment characterized by prolonging period of military and quasi-military rules where personal and group interest prevailed over institutional norms. After the restoration of parliamentary democracy, political institutions including the parliaments are gradually rolling towards institutionalization while bureaucracy as an institution is on decay with declining elitism and esprit de corps. Moreover, like politicians, the civil servants in Bangladesh have been more interested in serving their own interests than in protecting the democratic rights of the public.

The overall findings of this paper discovered the fact that there is a close relationship between colonial rule and governance. The quality of governance of a country depends on its administration by which a state carries out its function and achieves its objects through implementing its policies and development projects using existing resources. So, the better governance depends on better administration. Therefore, the more the administration or bureaucracy will be honest, transparent, fair and accountable the more will be the attainment of better governance. Since the administrative structure of Bangladesh is inherited from colonial legacy including several adverse cardinal features, the quality of governance is poor and worldwide known as one of the most corrupt countries of the world.

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